

A BRONZE AGE GRAVE FROM A. ASKAROV'S COLLECTION: INTERPRETATION OF FUNERARY PRACTICES AND MATERIAL CULTURE

Karimova Dilafruz Obidjonovna

Doctor of Philosophy in History (PhD)

*Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Uzbekistan State Museum of the History of
Uzbekistan*

Head of the scientific department of history

Annation: *This article analyzes a Bronze Age tomb displayed in the exposition of the State Museum of the History of Uzbekistan.*

Key words: *Museum, bronze age, Sapallitepa, Jarkotan, pottery, tools, burial rites, exposition.*

Аннотация: *В данной статье анализируется погребение эпохи бронзы, представленное в экспозиции Государственного музея истории Узбекистана.*

Ключевые слова: *музей, эпоха бронзы, Сапаллитепа, Джаркутан, керамика, орудия труда, погребения, экспозиция.*

Our country has a powerful history and it also has an incomparable spiritual heritage. In order to analyzing a clear future, predict the acute prediction we should to know our ancient customs. Moreover, it gives an opportunity to be aware of our ancient funeral ceremonies . Particularly noteworthy are the rituals associated with burials in the Bronze Age, which were perfectly preserved in ancient times. In Bronze age, It is worth noting that the tradition of burial ceremonies in the territory of Sapallitepa. Southern Uzbekistan (Surkhandarya) is one of the first centers of settled population. A quadrangular fortification was excavated in Sapallitepa. Remains of residential buildings, household and utility rooms, and craft workshops were found within the fortification. In Sapallitepa, 8 houses were surveyed. The lower parts of the dwelling were coated with mud plaster, and the floors of the grain storage rooms were also finished with gypsum plaster. In the utility rooms, the floors were either plastered or paved with ceramic tiles. Evidence suggests that pottery and metalworking were highly developed in Sapallitepa. Various pottery items were used on the farm to store livestock and agricultural products. Bronze was used to make daggers, arrowheads and spearheads, knives, copper needles, and vessels. [1, 26-27].

The next stage of the Sapallitepa was Jarkotan monument, and while burials were carried out inside the house during the Sapallitepa period, this tradition continued in the early stages of the Jarkotan monument. By the final period of

Jarkotan, a separate 20-hectare cemetery appears. This, in turn, indicates that the process of centralization of religion has also begun.

The second stage of the Sapalli culture is the Jarkoton monument, and while burials were carried out indoors during the Sapallitepa period, this tradition continued in the early stages of the Jarkoton monument. By the end of the Jarkoton period, a separate 20-hectare cemetery appeared. This, in turn, indicates that the process of centralization of religion had begun.

The Jarkoton cemetery covers a large area, which researchers call Zharkoton-3, Jarkoton-4a, 4b, 4c [2, 17]. Extensive research has been conducted in the Jarkoton cemetery since 1974, and 731 graves have been discovered on the 1-hectare area of Jarkoton-4a. According to the analysis of archaeological materials, it was determined that Zharkoton-4a consists of graves belonging to four chronological periods [3, 48-49]. A. Askarov managed to open 52 graves from the 5th hill of the Jarkotan monument, that is, from the residential complexes in the "proto-city" part. In addition to the last Jarkotan stage of the Sapalli culture, these cemeteries also contain graves from the Kozali, Mulali, and Boston periods [4, 11]. Thus, the emergence of a temple for the city dwellers in the late Jarkotan period led to the improvement and regulation of various religious customs, that is, to the concentration of all customs and traditions associated with the burial ceremonies of the communities in the hands of the temple priests and servants. Also, the emergence of a separate cemetery for the burial of the deceased in the late Jarkotan period, away from residential areas, indicates that the ideological worldview of people began to change, and religious ideas began to take deeper roots in their minds. These are evidences of the attention paid to the preservation of clean air in rural areas. Preservation of clean air later became one of the main elements of Zoroastrianism.

One of these graves is currently on display in the permanent exhibition of the State Museum of the History of Uzbekistan, which is considered the largest museum in our country. This grave in the museum was opened and studied by the researcher of this monument, academician A.A. Askarov, and presented to the museum. To this day, the finds from this grave are permanently registered and preserved in the Archaeological Fund under the serial number 949/10 of the collection 253, entry book. The details and processes of the opening of graves in this cemetery were revealed during an interview with the main author of this object, A. Askarov. "In the summer of 1983, the head of our state Sh. Rashidov suddenly ordered an expedition to the expedition area. At that time, my team and I were busy opening a tomb. Naturally, I was in a deep pit, inside a tomb. Suddenly Sh. Rashidov appeared on top of the tomb we were excavating. We were surprised. I pulled myself together and quickly went up to them. Sh. Rashidov extended his

hand to me to meet them. When I told them, "Excuse me, my hands are dusty, I need to wash them," he said, shaking my hand tightly, saying, "These hands are sacred ancient soil and the dust on the hands of those who study our history, it's an honor." There I gave information about the expedition's news and introduced them. Then, amazed by the finds, the head of our state said that we should show these finds to everyone. Then, they asked me, "What do you need from me?" I said that it would be good to build a museum in this area, even if it was small, that would display the finds in one place. After that, the Sherabad Museum was built. Until recently, this museum operated as a museum that housed the finds of the Sapalli culture. During this conversation, they proposed to deliver one of them to a large museum in the capital, so that more people could see the burial ceremonies of this period, and foreign tourists could get acquainted with it. So, in 1983, we displayed the grave of a woman with rich finds, which was discovered at the Jarkotan monument, in the current State Museum of the History of Uzbekistan" [5, 1]. This grave and its finds are still on display in the museum's exposition "Uzbekistan in the Bronze Age".

This grave belongs to a woman, and the grave is rich in objects. There are also bronze mirrors, ceramic jugs, vases, bowls, and small dishes. At the same time, certain pieces of sheep bone were placed in a special small woven straw basket behind the head of the deceased. This indicates that a religious ceremony was held in the cemetery for this deceased by relatives and tribesmen, during which a sheep was sacrificed. A certain part of it was placed in the grave with the deceased. In another 19 graves from this period, small horned animal bones were found [6, 12]. Certain parts of the sacrificed animal, namely 3-4 ribs, one hind femur, and the sternum, were placed in containers and placed in the grave. This custom was applied depending on the social status of the deceased during his or her lifetime. A large number of various bronze objects and ceramic vessels were found in such graves. This shows that during the Jarkotan stage, sheep sacrifice was mainly found in the graves of elderly people in the tribe, who had earned prestige in the tribe through their work.

321 graves from the late Jarkotan period of the Sapalli culture were studied. If we compare the burial rituals of the second phase of this stage with the previous ones, it is noticeable that burial customs have changed. During this period, the head of the deceased began to be turned not only to the north, but also to the northwest [7, 12]. Thus, the gradual turning of the head of the deceased to the west was associated with the strengthening of their religious beliefs in the sun, and they may have compared the end of a person's life with the setting of the sun.

Bronze objects were found in 65 graves from this period [8, 7]. In 3 graves belonging to men, labor and military weapons such as daggers, knives, awls, axes,

spears, axes, and hoes were found. In women's graves, labor tools such as bronze mirrors, bracelets, earrings, antimony, awl, and clay spindle whorl were found [9, 11]. As a result of comparative analysis of material evidence from the graves with finds from neighboring regions, it became clear that the people of Jarkotan had close economic and ethnocultural ties with peasant communities in Northern Afghanistan, Southern Turkmenistan, especially the Murghab oasis, and northeastern Iran. In particular, Jarkotan ceramics can be seen in a comparative analysis with ceramics from the Dashli period of Northern Afghanistan and the Namozgoh period of Southern Turkmenistan of the VI century. In addition, many bronze seals were found in the Jarkotan cemetery. They can be compared with seals found in monuments from Northern Afghanistan, Southern Turkmenistan, and northeastern Iran. Their periodic date is determined by the 2nd millennium BC [10, 36-39]. The range of such comparative finds is not limited to ceramic objects and seals, but their parallels can also be seen in metal objects, stone beads, labor tools, and the shapes of bow and arrowheads. This shows that in the 2nd millennium BC the peoples of Central Asia and the Middle East were in social, economic and ethnocultural contact with each other.

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